

Friendship

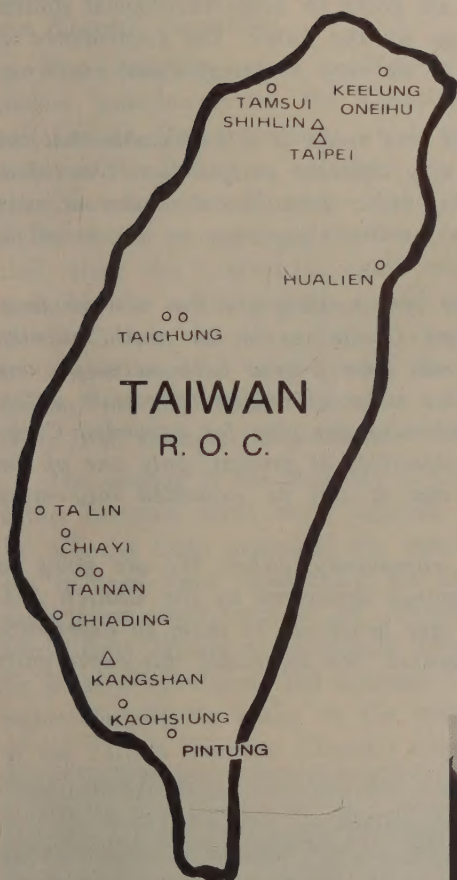
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Delegates to the 5th World Anglican Chinese Clergy Conference gather on the steps of the National Palace Museum.

BISHOP'S LETTER

Dear friends:

It was a great honor for this diocese to host the Fifth World Anglican Chinese Clergy Convention. We welcomed 120 Chinese clergy and their spouses to Taiwan for a convention centered on the theme "The Decade of Evangelism."

This year we have been celebrating the Fortieth Anniversary of our mission here in Taiwan. This celebration has taken many forms, including publishing new books, holding special seminars and Thanksgiving services (one in the north and one in the south), and launching special projects for mission and service. This diocese has been struggling for its very survival (not financially but numerically) for the past few years as death and emigration have taken a heavy toll. This is very sad. However, on July 7th, we held a seminar on Church Development in the north, and formulated a vision for starting new missions in the Taipei area. St. John's Cathedral and the Church of the Good Shepherd will each take care of one mission project. This represents new hope for this diocese.

In addition, we have three church members who are going to begin theological studies at the Fu Jen Catholic Seminary this fall, another good sign for the future. The coincidence of these two developments with our Fortieth Anniversary is, to us, very meaningful and encouraging.

Although Taiwan is a tiny island and this diocese is very small, it is undeniable that the northern and southern districts of this diocese maintain very different perspectives. One challenge that we must face soon is the prospect of developing either into two deaneries or even into two separate dioceses. We need all our friends to pray for God's guidance on our behalf as we decide how best to proceed.

Training the next generation of church leaders is another very pressing problem that we face. We held a retreat for members of vestries and the Bishop's Committee in the north recently, and will hold another one soon in the south. These retreats have proved both necessary and beneficial for these church members. We also plan to hold a series of smaller retreats in different areas for lay leaders in hopes of training them to implement our plan for expanded Christian education. "To become an educated Church" is our objective. At present, only one of the churches has a Sunday School program, and we hope that it can be expanded into more churches in the future.

We never forget that we are part of the international community, either. We are going to send two youth representatives to the Youth World Conference sponsored by the Church Missionary Society this fall in London. We believe it will be very beneficial to them to experience how precious it is to be a member of the Anglican Communion. We appreciate this opportunity very much.

Please pray for us, and may God bless you.

Sincerely,

The Right Rev. John C.T. Chien

Bishop of Taiwan



Delegates to the 34th Diocesan Convocation

NEWS OF THE DIOCESAN CONVOCATION

The Taiwan Episcopal Church held its 34th Convocation February first and second, 1994, at the Holiday Hotel in Taoyuan City. In all, 22 clerical and 38 lay delegates attended, along with nine observers and the diocesan secretarial staff.

The Convocation got underway at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February first, with the delegates' registration and roll call. After celebrating Holy Eucharist together, the delegates then got down to business, discussing the minutes of the previous Convocation and electing new members to various diocesan committees.

The delegates also considered and passed amendments to the Constitutions and Canons. One amendment which passed removed the Bishop as automatic chair of the Commission on Ministry. Bishop John Chien noted in arguing for this revision that, since the Commission chair was responsible for submitting an annual report to the Bishop, he was in effect reporting to himself once a year! Under the new system, the Commission will elect its own chair from amongst its members.

The evening of the first day of Convocation featured three short lectures. Rev. Dr. Charles Chen presented the results of his findings when researching his D.Min. dissertation with regard to "Presenting Christianity Within a Religiously Pluralistic Society." Professor and diocesan Chancellor Herbert Ma spoke on the evolution of the Taiwan Episcopal Church's Constitutions and Canons. Finally, Rev. Samuel Lin of St. John's and St. Mary's Technical Institute spoke on relating the Eucharistic liturgy to daily life.

During the second day, several important issues were brought forward for consideration. Bishop Chien sponsored a resolution to establish a "Fortieth Anniversary Commemorative Development Fund." This fund, targeted at NT\$20 million, would serve to aid in local parish development. A parish with a specific project in mind

would apply to the Fund's administrative committee, which would review all applications and allocate available monies. This resolution passed.

The Church of the Good Shepherd sponsored a resolution asking the diocese to consider its future status within the Anglican Communion. Noting that Korea has recently become an independent province, Hong Kong and Macao will become a province sometime before 1997, and Singapore and Malaysia have plans to form a province soon, the resolution asked that the Taiwan Episcopal Church consider taking a similar step in the future, either on its own or in cooperation with other dioceses.

In the discussion that followed, Bishop Chien pointed out that traditionally, within the Anglican Communion, a province needs at least three dioceses of at least fifteen full parishes each, a condition which the Taiwan church cannot meet at the present time. In response, the sponsors asked that this resolution be passed as a way of focusing attention on the future of the diocese. The Taiwan Episcopal Church has been a part of the ECUSA for most of its forty years, but its concerns do not always coincide with those of the "mainland" church. In the end, the delegates voted to set up a commission to study the proposal and submit recommendations to the next Convocation.

Finally, recognizing the severe financial difficulties of the ECUSA, the delegates voted to request that the Episcopal Church cut in half the amount of direct money grants the diocese receives annually. This motion also passed, and in his letter to the Presiding Bishop, Bishop Chien thanked the ECUSA for unfailingly honoring its commitment to support its overseas dioceses even in the face of its current fiscal crisis.

The proceedings went smoothly in an atmosphere of shared faith and good fellowship. Special thanks go to Deacon Elizabeth Wei for her hours of organizing.

CLAIRE TILLEY DEPARTS FOR ENGLAND

After two years of service to St. James' Church in Taichung, Claire Tilley will be heading back to England later in the summer. The diocese appreciates Claire's dedication to her work, both as English Secretary to the church and English teacher in the kindergarten.

Of her time in Taiwan, Claire wrote us the following: "When I arrived at St. James, Taichung almost two years ago, bewildered and amazed, I never thought that so many aspects of life in Taiwan would become so familiar and ordinary. Everything at that time was an adventure. Wandering around the neighborhood streets, who knew what weird and wonderful sights might befall me! Ghost Money burning ceremonies on the sidewalk, street weddings complete with noisy firecrackers and a workshop where statues of Chinese gods are carved next door to a luxury car salesroom were all scenes that left me wondering. These days I pay no more attention than I would to the happenings on a street in London.

"Chinese culture, however, takes a foreigner much longer to get used to. I think Chinese ways would take a lifetime to fully understand. Nevertheless the many Chinese friends I have gotten to know over my time in Taiwan have given me a love for the people and a fascination for their culture as well as a desire for more and more of them to come to know the Lord personally.

"I have enjoyed teaching English at St. James' both to the kindergarten children and to groups of their parents and friends. It has given me a chance to build some good relationships and thereby share something of my faith and the reason I came to Taiwan. I am now planning to return to England to obtain a qualification in Teaching English as a Foreign Language so that I may continue in this career.

"During my two years here I've seen the English-speaking congregation at St. James' grow in number and depth of unity and fellowship. It is a very transient congregation. It has been described as a moving staircase. Some people rush up the stairs as the events of their lives bring them to Taichung for a very short time. Others stand on one step and glide up slowly becoming faithful and longstanding members of the congregation. This situation produces the kind of ministry that God seems to have called the church to do. As there are only about thirty of us, we have to welcome each new person into our group as they pass through Taichung, enjoying fellowship with them and serving them in any way we can.

"I shall return to England very happy to have had the opportunity to live and work in Taichung for two years but also very sad to leave behind so many dear friends who have shown me such love, generosity, and hospitality."

VISITORS TO THE DIOCESE

The Fifth World Anglican Chinese Clergy Conference brought over 120 visitors to the diocese this year. Among those attending the conference were many old friends of the diocese, including REV. DR. PETER LEUNG of the Church Missionary Society, London; REV. DAVID CHEE, formerly rector of Good Shepherd Church, Shihlin; REV. WINSTON CHING, the ECUSA's Officer for Asiamerica Ministry; and REV. PEYTON CRAIGHILL, now with the diocese of Pennsylvania.

CLERGY

REV. SAMUEL LIAO returned from Singapore to take the post of Acting Rector of Good Shepherd Church while the search continued for a permanent rector.

The search committee and vestry of Good Shepherd Church have completed their work, and the diocese is pleased to welcome REV. NATHANIEL WEI-CHANG HSIEH as new rector of Good Shepherd Church. Rev. Hsieh has resided in Paris for the past ten years, where he has been involved in social work and ministering to the Chinese community in France. He will come in November to take up the reins at Good Shepherd.

REV. RAYMOND HAY completed his contract with the English congregation at St. James, and returned to Ireland shortly after the Diocesan Convocation.

NEWS OF GOOD SHEPHERD

Much has happened at Good Shepherd since December. On January 1st, Charles Aylwin began his "retirement" by marrying Yen Ming at a beautiful wedding ceremony held in the church and then holding a scrumptious feast in the courtyard. Yen Ming chose to wear a traditional Chinese dress -- a superb chi-pao in red and gold.

January is the month for the Parish Annual Meeting at which the elections are held for vestry and other church officers. The English Warden appointed to replace Charles Aylwin is Compton Tothill. New members of the vestry are Christian Murck and Paula Newbould with Bill McGrath and Mike Waters as supplementing members.

With rising costs for running the church, it was pleasing to have the pledged giving meet its required figure, however there seems to be a tendency for people (not only here) to fall behind in their giving and then make it up later in the year. This creates some problems administratively in terms of cash-flow.

During the first few months our brunches and fellowship meetings have been held regularly. New and old members are invited to attend these gatherings and offer their homes for the meetings. On those Sundays when there is not a brunch, coffee hour follows the worship service in the Parish Hall.

All through the first half of this year, the Search Committee was actively involved in the work of finding a new Rector for the parish. The position was offered to the Rev. Samuel Liao, who has been Acting Rector since February, but he declined the offer for health reasons. Consequently, the parish invited the Rev. Nathaniel Hsieh of Paris to be the Rector. He has accepted the job and will take up the position later on this year. Meanwhile, we are very grateful to Fr. Samuel for his ministry at Good Shepherd.

After Easter, an evangelism -training study was conducted over a period of six weeks with a small number of the English-speaking congregation participating. The "Person-to-Person" video study will be offered again after the summer vacation period.

In early May, the parish held a most successful Bazaar in the church courtyard. Because of its success, the vestry is planning to hold another bazaar next year. The proceeds were divided evenly between the S.O.S. Children's Village and the Roman Catholic home for mentally handicapped children, St. Anne's in Tienmou. Good Shepherd has a very close relationship with the Village.

At Chinese New Year, a number of parishioners from the English Congregation went out to the Village for lunch with the children. The meal was prepared entirely by the young people of the village. Again in May, the monthly brunch took the form of a potluck/picnic with the children. Richard White and Ma Chen bring some of the children regularly to the English Service.

Every few months we are privileged to have a visit from the Rev. Graham Ogden who was part-time English Chaplain some years ago. Graham graciously assists with the preaching in both English and Mandarin. He also leads the worship when available. The purpose of his visits to Taiwan is to consult with the Bible Society translators who are currently working on a translation of the Bible into an aboriginal language.

During this 40th Anniversary year of the Diocese of Taiwan we have shared in the celebrations. Following the World Chinese Anglican Clergy Conference, Bishop Moses Tay of Singapore attended the Chinese service, and the Rev. Winston Ching from New York preached at the English service. Later in the afternoon a number of Good Shepherd people attended the main thanksgiving Eucharist at St. John's Cathedral.

Our overseas visitors so far this year have also included the Rev. Nathaniel Hsieh, the Rev. and Mrs. Richard Pidgeon. William Leigh-Pemberton's parents, Lord and Lady Kingsdowne, paid a short visit with William, who now resides in Shanghai but still considers himself a member of our parish!

Fortunately, the strong earthquake that hit during our 9:00 service back in June and Typhoon Tim which hit in July did not cause us any problems. Only minor damage resulted from the typhoon as the courtyard became a swimming pool.

It is normal for frequent changes to take place in the English congregation, particularly in the summer. The first to take leave this year were Charles and Yen Ming. More recently, the Potter family moved on to Singapore, Karin Belton returned to the U.S.A. and the Lloyds to New Zealand. However, newcomers often replace the leavers and so we have Warwick and Julia Mayall and their family from the U.K. We understand that others from the U.S.A. will be joining us soon.

-- Rev. Andrew Scott - Branagan

TAIWAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH HOSTS 1994's FIFTH WORLD ANGLICAN CHINESE CLERGY CONFERENCE



They came from Taiwan, Sabah, Kuching, West Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, the United States, Canada, England, Australia, France, the Philippines. They spoke Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese, English, and French. There were over 90 of them, and they all had two things in common: they were all ethnic Chinese, and they were all Anglican Clergy. They came together at the Holiday Hotel in Taoyuan City, Taiwan, to enjoy six days of fellowship together from April 26th to May 1st, at the Fifth World Anglican Chinese Clergy Conference.

This conference takes place once every five years in order to give Chinese Anglican clergy, no matter where they live and work, a chance to get together and share their common work, problems, and joys. The last World Anglican Clergy Conference convened in Singapore in July, 1989. At that time it was decided to convene the Fifth meeting in Taiwan.

The Taiwan Episcopal Church chose to center this year's meeting around the theme, "The Decade of Evangelism." In order to stimulate the participants to think about this theme, the diocese asked Dr. Chou Lian-hua of the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary to serve as the keynote speaker. During the course of the conference, Dr. Chou delivered three talks, on the topics of Pastoral Care, Clergy Training, and Evangelism.

During other plenary sessions, participants from all the regions represented at the conference gave brief summaries of their missions and work in three "Sharing Our Work" programs. In order to provide more opportunities for more intimate fellowship, the diocese also provided for small group Bible study and small group discussions centering on Dr. Chou's talks. The schedule also provided for a full round of worship and praise each day, beginning with a pre-breakfast Eucharist, sessions of singing and praise, and noon prayer.

Among this year's participants were a record five Chinese Anglican bishops (Bishop Chien of Taiwan, Bishop Kwong of Hong Kong, Bishop Tay of Singapore, Bishop Leong of Kuching, and Bishop Yong of Sabah). Citing their importance as leaders among the Overseas Chinese community, Republic of China President Lee Teng-hui met with the bishops for a special reception on Friday, April 30th. At the same time, the other clergy were treated to a special luncheon at the Grand Hotel hosted by the Overseas Chinese Commission.

In other excursions out of the hotel, participants went on a tour of Tamsui to see St. John's and St. Mary's Institute of Technology and some of that city's tourist attractions such as Fort Santo Domingo. Clergy spouses meanwhile took an overnight trip to Hsi-tou and Sun Moon Lake, both popular tourist resort areas in Taiwan.

The only regret that anyone felt during this time of happy fellowship and sharing was due to the absence of any clergy from Mainland China. The Taiwan Episcopal Church made efforts to bring over one or two participants by special invitation, but to no avail.

On the final Sunday morning, participants fanned out to various area churches to worship, and some to lead in worship. The Rev. Winston Ching, the head of the ECUSA Asia-ministry, celebrated and preached a memorable sermon during the English service at the Church of the Good Shepherd.

This event is the largest ever organized within the Taiwan Episcopal Church, and special thanks are due to the Rev. Elizabeth Wei for the long hours she put into the effort, and the diocesan staff for working overtime to see that the whole conference came off without a hitch.

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CONTINUES

The Taiwan Episcopal Church's formal organization into a diocese of the Anglican Communion took place in 1954. At that time, although it was formally a part of the Anglican Church of Japan (Nippon Sei Ko Kai), it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Hawaii, and the American church sent priests here to work in the fields of the Lord.

Forty years have passed since that time, and many changes have taken place. In 1960, the Japanese church officially handed Taiwan over to the American church and the new Diocese of Taiwan was created. In the intervening years, the diocese has been pastored by five bishops, has built churches and missions, and has established a theological training program at Trinity Hall.

The diocese has planned several events to mark this fortieth anniversary year. Among those already completed are:

1. The proposed translations of B.D. Tucker's "Questions on the Way" and Michael Ramsey's "The Anglican Spirit" have already reached publication and are now being widely circulated in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The diocese is also receiving inquiries and orders from Chinese communities in other places, such as Sabah, Malaysia and Boston, Massachusetts.

2. The diocese held a special thanksgiving Eucharist on May 1st, 1994 (the Fifth Sunday of Easter), at 5:00 p.m. Bishop Chien served as the preacher and principal celebrant, assisted by the Revs. Michael Liu, Charles Chen, and Samuel Lin as co-celebrants. This service coincided with the World Chinese Anglican Clergy Conference, and so many of the clergy who had come to Taiwan for that event came and shared this happy moment with us.



The 40th anniversary thanksgiving service at St. John's Cathedral

A CHRISTIAN RITE FOR EXPRESSING RESPECT TO ONE'S ANCESTORS

This year, an ad hoc committee called into being by Bishop John Chi-tung Chien with the consent of the diocesan Standing Committee released a draft "Liturgy for the Expression of Respect to One's Ancestors" for trial use and comment. The express purpose of this liturgy is to provide a means, within the framework of Christian worship, for Chinese Christians to express their gratitude and reverence toward their deceased ancestors.

This represents a departure from the attitude taken toward the cult of the ancestors by most Christian groups in China. Up until now, the usual response has been to condemn "ancestor worship" as a form of idolatry and to forbid it among Church members. This is understandable, given that the cult of the ancestors in China contains within its worldview and practices elements that clearly go beyond the simple expression of sentiments of gratitude and reverence, and into the realm of religion and worship.

In terms of its practice, the veneration of ancestors involves presenting them with offerings of food, paper money, and paper replicas of goods that they are likely to need in the next world, such as houses and cars. It also involves maintaining an altar at home upon which are enshrined p'ai wei, wooden tablets about eight to twelve inches (20 to 30 cm) high upon which are inscribed the names of the ancestors, sometimes accompanied by a photo. In addition, there are obligations to maintain their tombs in good repair, particularly at the festival of Ch'ing ming, referred to in English as Tomb-Sweeping Day. In return for these services of maintaining the memory of the deceased and providing for their material needs, the ancestors are expected to insure the living family's prosperity, good fortune, offspring, health, and so on.

In addition to these practical aspects, there are also elements in the worldview of the ancestral cult that clearly cannot be squared with Christian doctrine. For example, the standard Chinese funeral service lasts for 49 days, or seven weeks. This is based on the Chinese Buddhist belief that the "soul" of the departed hovers in a kind of limbo for this period before going to

the next rebirth, and its destiny can be influenced by proper religious teachings and practices during this period. To give another example, the performances of Taoist priests during a funeral are intended to reproduce for the living participants the progress of the soul as it passes through the various departments of the underworld bureaucracy. At each stage the soul must make an account of its life and receive authorization to proceed towards a good destiny.

It is plain that these practices and worldviews cannot be incorporated into Christianity in the name of "cultural adaptation" without distorting it so much that it becomes unrecognizable to Christians in other parts of the world. Therefore, most Christian groups in China have simply forbidden these practices among converts.

The result has been disastrous for evangelism in the Far East. In Taiwan, it is estimated that only about five percent of the population is Christian, a number that has remained static for many years. It was therefore felt within the Episcopal Church in Taiwan that some outlet for expressing gratitude and reverence for ancestors within the overall worldview of Christianity would be a better response than outright condemnation and proscription. Thus, the ad hoc committee worked for over two years to come up with its draft liturgy, which draws on passages from such Confucian classics as the Classic on Filial Piety (Hsiao Ching) and the Book of Odes (Shih Ching) as well as the Bible for its content. In addition, the committee chose scripture lessons that bring out the biblical views on children's duties to their parents, such as Psalm 112: 1-6 and Exodus 3:14-15. In place of the Psalm, worshippers also have the option of using a passage from the Book of Odes.

It is the hope of the Taiwan Episcopal Church that having such a liturgy will not only open the door to the Church a little wider for the people of Taiwan, but will also provide a timely example of how Christianity may be "de-Westernized" for the Asian context without losing its exclusive hope in the salvific act of God in Christ in the process.